

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SINGAP 04798 041148Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-05 CAB-02 CA-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 SP-02 PRS-01 SS-15 USIE-00 USSS-00

SY-05 FAA-00 WRDE-00 MCT-01 /094 W

-----042275 051050Z /21

R 031005Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8909

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 4798

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PORS, PINS, SN, VM

SUBJ: HIJACKING OF VIETNAMESE AIRCRAFT

REF: SINGAPORE 4783

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. NOVEMBER 2 ISSUE OF AFTERNOON DAILY NEW NATION CARRIED EDITORIAL ON HIJACKING OF VIETNAMESE AIRCRAFT TO SINGAPORE.

2. EDITORIAL OBSERVES THAT HIJACKING HAS PRESENTED SINGAPORE WITH "A COMPLEX MORAL, LEGAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEM". VIETNAMESE WANT HIJACKERS BACK, VIETNAMESE REFUGEE GROUPS WANT THEM GIVEN ASYLUM, AND INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE PILOTS WANT FIRM ACTION AGAINST THEM. EDITORIAL LAUDS SINGAPORE AUTHORITIES FOR TERMINATING THE HIJACKING AND HELPING SURVIVORS RETURN HOME RATHER THAN MERELY REFUELING THEM AND SENDING THEM ON THEIR

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WAY AS THAI AUTHORITIES DID.

3. EDITORIAL NOTES THAT GOS INTENDS TO DEAL WITH HIJACKING "IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW AND CONVENTIONS". IT POINTS OUT THAT CONVENTIONS PROVIDE FOR EXTRADITION OF HIJACKERS IF THERE IS EXTRADITION TREATY BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED, BUT THAT THERE IS NO SUCH TREATY BETWEEN SINGAPORE

AND VIETNAM.

4. FINAL PARAGRAPH OF EDITORIAL AS FOLLOWS: "SINGAPORE HAS AN OBLIGATION BOTH TO HELP FIGHT AIR PIRACY GENERALLY AND IN THIS SPECIFIC CASE TO ENSURE THAT JUSTICE IS DONE. INTERNATIONAL LAW, IT APPEARS, ALLOWS EXTRAORDINARY EXERCISE OF JURISDICTION OVER PIRATES RECOGNIZED AS COMMON ENEMIES "OF ALL MANKIND". SO IT SEEMS POSSIBLE FOR THE SINGAPORE AND VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENTS TO SERVE THE COMMON CAUSE OF JUSTICE BY AGREEING TO PUT THE HIJACKERS ON TRIAL HERE. HANOI'S AGREEMENT IS NECESSARY, BECAUSE THERE WILL BE NEED FOR WITNESSES FROM VIETNAM. SINGAPORE CAN STILL PUT THE HIJACKERS ON TRIAL FOR WHATEVER OFFENCE IS DISCLOSED, EVEN IF HANOI DOES NOT CO-OPERATE. THE REQUEST TO HAND THE HIJACKERS OVER TO THE VIETNAMESE IS ONE THAT SINGAPORE OBVIOUSLY CANNOT AGREE TO ON BOTH LEGAL AND MORAL GROUNDS. AND IF ANYONE OF WHATEVER IDEOLOGY TRIES TO PUT ON THE PRESSURE, SINGAPORE HAS SHOWN THAT IT IS CAPABLE OF DOING WHAT IT BELIEVES TO BE RIGHT. IT WOULD BE WRONG TO DO A PONTIUS PILATE." END UNCLASSIFIED.

5. BEGIN SECRET. DIRECTOR OF ISD TOLD US IN CONFIDENCE THAT THIS EDITORIAL PRECISELY REFLECTS VIEWS OF SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT. IT THUS APPEARS THAT GOS IS APPROACHING DECISION TO TRY HIJACKERS HERE RATHER THAN RETURN THEM TO VIETNAM. HOLDRIDGE

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009